



U.S. Department of Justice
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NEWS RELEASE

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CALIFORNIA MAN CHARGED WITH TRAVELING IN INTERSTATE COMMERCE TO HAVE SEX WITH A MINOR

KANSAS CITY, Kan. – United States Attorney Eric Melgren announced that Gene Vladimir Czaplinsky, 59, Topanga, California, currently in custody, was charged today by criminal complaint with one count of traveling in interstate commerce on September 7, 2004, for the purpose of engaging in a sexual act with a minor.

Melgren said that an affidavit filed with the court alleges that from October 15, 2003, through September 7, 2004, Czaplinsky was chatting in an internet chatroom with what he thought was a fourteen year old girl, actually an agent with the FBI Cyber Crimes Task Force. The affidavit alleges that Czaplinsky chatted approximately 63 times with the agent, whom he believed to be a fourteen year old girl, beginning in October 2003 including conversations about engaging in a sexual act. The affidavit alleges that Czaplinsky traveled from California to Kansas and made arrangements to meet the girl at Oak Park Mall on September 7, 2004. The affidavit further alleges that Czaplinsky was arrested by the FBI at the Oak Park Mall on September 7, 2004.

Czaplinsky is currently in custody and made his initial appearance today in U.S. District Court in Kansas City, Kansas. His next court date is scheduled for September 15, 2004, at 10:00 a.m. for an arraignment.

If convicted, Czaplinsky faces a maximum of thirty years in federal prison without parole. The case was investigated by the FBI Cyber Crimes Task Force and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kim Berger.

As in any criminal case, a person is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. The charges filed merely contain allegations of criminal conduct.